

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is filed in order to facilitate processing in the above-identified application. In particular, new claims 24 and 25 have been added.

Thus, it now appears that the application is in condition for reconsideration and allowance. Reconsideration and allowance at an early date are respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed within the currently set shortened statutory period, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such extension of time may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

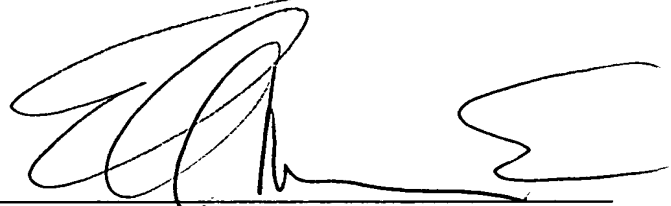
In the event that any additional fees are due with this paper, please charge
our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: February 18, 2004

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EMAS', written over a horizontal line.

Ellen Marcie Emas
Registration No. 32,131

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620